

CLAIMS

1. A compound comprising a target cell-specific portion and a cytotoxic portion, characterised in that the cytotoxic second portion is a constitutively active caspase or has substantially the same apoptosis-inducing activity as said caspase.
2. A compound comprising a mediator portion capable of recognising a target cell-specific molecule and a cytotoxic second portion, characterised in that the cytotoxic second portion is a constitutively active caspase or has substantially the same apoptosis-inducing activity as said caspase.
3. A compound according to Claim 1 wherein the target cell-specific portion recognises and selectively binds to a tumour cell antigen.
4. A compound according to Claim 2 wherein the mediator portion recognises a compound according to Claim 1.
5. A compound according to Claim 2 or 4 wherein the target cell-specific molecule recognised by the mediator portion is derivatised.
6. A compound as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the target cell-specific portion or the mediator portion is an antibody or an antigen binding fragment thereof.
7. A compound as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the target cell-specific portion is internalised upon contact with the target cell.

8. A compound as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the target cell-specific portion or the mediator portion is an HMFG-1 antibody or an antigen binding fragment thereof.
9. A compound according to anyone of claims 6 to 8 wherein the antibody or antigen binding fragment thereof is humanised.
10. A compound according to any preceding claim wherein the cytotoxic portion is at least the catalytically active portion of a constitutively active caspase.
11. A compound according to any preceding claim wherein the cytotoxic portion is a constitutively active effector caspase or has substantially the same apoptosis-inducing activity as the said caspase.
12. A compound according to any preceding claim wherein the cytotoxic portion is a constitutively active caspase-3, caspase-6 or caspase-7, or has substantially the same apoptosis-inducing activity as the said caspase.
13. A compound according to any preceding claim wherein the cytotoxic portion is of mammalian origin.
14. A compound according to any preceding claim wherein the cytotoxic portion is a constitutively active variant of a naturally occurring caspase.
15. A compound according to any preceding claim wherein the cytotoxic

portion is capable of oligomerisation.

16. A compound according to any preceding claim wherein said compound is a fusion compound.
17. An isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding a compound according to any one of Claims 1 to 16, or a target cell-specific portion, mediator portion or cytotoxic portion thereof.
18. A method of making a compound according to any one of Claims 1 to 16, said method comprising expressing one or more nucleic acid molecules according to Claim 17 in a host cell and isolating the compound therefrom.
19. A vector for expressing in a host cell a compound according to any one of Claim 1 to 16 or a portion thereof, said vector comprising one or more nucleic acid molecules according to Claim 17.
20. A host cell transformed with a vector according to Claim 19.
21. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to any one of Claims 1 to 16 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or excipient.
22. A compound according to any one of Claims 1 to 16 for use in medicine.
23. Use of a compound according to any one of Claims 1 to 16 in the

preparation of a medicament for treating a disease associated with the dysfunction of a population of cells.

24. The use according to Claim 23 for treating cancer.
25. A method of treating a patient having target cells to be destroyed, the method comprising administering to a patient a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to any one of Claims 1 to 16.
26. A method according to Claim 25 wherein the patient is human.
27. A method according to Claim 25 or 26 wherein the patient has cancer.